



100 Years of Extension

For over 100 years 4-H members, leaders, families, and parents have been engaged in their communities through community service activities. Clubs in Yellowstone County routinely include service projects in their plans each year. Some projects include picking up trash, planting flowers in the local park, donating food, and updating the bathrooms at the fairgrounds. In 2014, approximately 275 4-H youth volunteered.

Service-learning intentionally integrates and emphasizes both service and learning. Youth engaged in service-learning not only provide direct service to the community, but also learn and grow in their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Effective service-learning benefits young people, sponsoring organizations, communities, and society.

This year Extension is celebrating 100 years in existence. Yellowstone County 4-H Youth Ambassadors wanted to celebrate by giving back to their community. They partnered with Tumbleweed, a non-profit organization specializing in assisting runaway, homeless, and otherwise at-risk youth and their families. The U.S. Department of Education reports there are approximately 700 homeless youth in Yellowstone County.



Clothing, food, and toiletries for the Tumbleweed Program collected by Yellowstone County youth as well as Extension Office staff .

Tumbleweed provides emergency shelter, family counseling and adolescent support groups, helping homeless children with day-to-day needs and more. In a year's time, 472 youth have been served by Tumbleweed. Ambassadors challenged 4-H members to gather 100 items (food, toiletries, clothing, etc.) to help assist these youth. Last year Ambassadors collected food to donate to Tumbleweed. Through service-learning, county 4-H'ers have helped their at-risk peers and learned that youth in our community have a variety of personal circumstances. 4-H plans to continue this blossoming partnership in the coming years.

Service-Learning projects:

- Are developed by youth and focus on what they see as important community needs.
- Help the community while providing a powerful learning opportunity for youth.
- Allow youth to connect learning outcomes and skills to real world experiences.
- Are typically not "one-time" efforts.

Extension Partners with the Yellowstone Aids Project

Yellowstone county's new Family and Consumer Sciences Agent and an EFNEP Nutrition Assistant, worked together to provide programs for the Yellowstone AIDS Project (YAP). YAP is committed to increasing HIV/AIDS awareness and providing prevention and client services to Montana. This past year 144 individuals living in Yellowstone County benefited from YAP's services. Extension reached an audience in which 99% fall at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

The first program demonstrated how to cook a whole chicken in a crock pot as well as alternative recipes for the chicken leftovers. YAP clients and staff were taught how to safely thaw, serve, and store foods to prevent food borne illness.

At times YAP clients cannot afford to buy food at a grocery store, but do have the option of a donated food box from Family Services Inc. The food boxes are filled with a wide variety of food items, but no ideas on how to make meals out of the contents. To assist clients, a donated 40 lb. box of food was

Extension Focuses on our Youth

obtained by the Extension Agent. Clients were then taught how to prepare a variety of unique meals from the contents. Clients also learned basics for making soups and stir fries, safe procedures to defrost meats, and freezing and drying techniques to preserve fresh produce.

A second food box was provide for the October YAP retreat. Clients and the agent brainstormed what to make with the box contents and decided on vegetable soup using chicken broth, a variety of included vegetables, beans, sausage and pasta. Clients made bread in a bag and were surprised to learn bread only required four ingredients. As part of a healthy lifestyle, participants went for a walk outside while the soup simmered and the bread rose. Educational materials on Vitamin D and ways to lead a healthy lifestyle were distributed along with fruit and vegetable fact sheets which covered the growing, storing, preparing and nutritional principles of common fruits and vegetables.

Fun Adventures for Military Youth

Have you ever wondered how military children can have fun and connect with others while a loved one is deployed? In 2014, military youth from several states participated in a three day Saddle & Paddle Adventure Camp. The 4-H Extension/Military Program staff in Yellowstone County welcomed the kids at Paintbrush Adventures near Absarokee, MT. These military youth enjoyed fun, high adventure opportunities while participating in safe camping experiences like hiking, horseback riding, and whitewater rafting.

Activities and workshops helped youth build confidence, positive relationships and a greater sense of resiliency to prepare them for the future. In a post camp survey, 90% of the campers said after this experience they were better prepared to make good decisions even when family members weren't around to help them. All campers reported they realized there are other people they can depend on, when needed.

Campers had daily opportunities to work in small groups where they could observe, share and find similarities in their military home life with other participants. They learned from each other that their current military situations were very similar. One young person said, "We experienced safety and learned to trust,



Saddle and Paddle Military Youth camp participants get ready for a day on the water to work on establishing trust in others and team-building skills.

those are some key things to a successful life!"

Most people don't realize that there are almost 7,000 children in Montana's military families. When National Guard, Army Reserve and other military parents living in civilian communities around Montana are mobilized, their children suddenly have unique needs for special support services. These "suddenly military" kids need to connect with other youth in similar situations. To meet these needs, the 4-H /Military program in Yellowstone County relies on strong community partnerships and 4-H Extension connections. Together we provide a program that is committed to delivering educational, recreational, and social events for youth of all military families.

Expanded Food and Nutrition Program Reaches Children and Adults

Adult Programming: A 7-series class totaling 3,906 hours of instruction to 372 adults was presented by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) educators. Classes were held in locations around Yellowstone County. Participants learned to stretch their food dollars and food baskets, to plan and prepare meals based on the USDA MyPlate Guidelines, to make healthy food choices, and increase their levels of physical activity.

Clients enthusiastically returned each week for the information, recipes and fellowship. Participants share ideas and encourage each other in preparing healthy meals and snacks for their families. As a result of family members taking the classes, 1,263 people were impacted by the researched-based information.

EFNEP and Urban Horticulture

One participant was a 19-year old, Hispanic female who grew up in a family rich in food culture. She lost 70 pounds in an exercise boot camp yet gained all of the weight back. Prior to enrolling in an EFNEP class her regular daily intake included a double cheeseburger, bacon cheeseburger, large fry, 44 oz. soda, bag of Cheetos, a chicken pot pie, mashed potatoes and gravy. Following completion of the program, her diet was incredibly different. Breakfast consisted of 2 cups of raisin bran, milk, orange juice, water, and 2 cups of watermelon for a mid-morning snack. Lunch was a bean and cheese burrito and a 44 oz. Mountain Dew and a snack of low-fat yogurt and 2 cups of spinach and 2 fat-free Italian dressing. In the evening, 3 cups of white rice with 2 teaspoons of soy sauce was all she needed. With the inclusion of spinach in many of the class recipes she discovered a new favorite and now incorporates spinach into many meals.

EFNEP partnered with the Healthy by Design Gardeners' Market by providing recipe samples that incorporated the market's available vegetables and fruits. As a result producers saw increased interest and the purchasing of garden produce.

Youth Programming: Over 880 children in grades 1st, 3rd and 5th throughout Yellowstone County were taught nutrition information in a series of 6 classes. In addition to the material taught in the classroom, teachers were encouraged to follow-up on the goals presented each week either through books to read or science experiments to conduct. Newsletters were sent home with the student to involve parents in discussions on related topics.

Youth lessons focused on being healthy for life and centered on the following ideas:

- 4 Fight BAC (bacteria) rules
- MyPlate Dietary Guidelines
- How many minutes of physical activity is needed each day to be healthy

Students eagerly welcome the nutrition educators and willingly share information they learn in class. Through pre- and post- surveys we have learned that 80% of 1st graders increased their knowledge of whole grains and 97% improved knowledge on choosing healthier foods. Ninety two percent of 3rd and 5th graders improved their knowledge

necessary to choose healthier foods consistent with the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Expanded Education Area and Demonstration Gardens

In addition to the existing square foot demonstration plot on the midway, a second site at the MetraPark Fairgrounds has been granted to the Yellowstone County Master Gardeners. This will offer the Extension Master Gardeners an additional opportunity to educate the community, by providing a central location where horticultural and food growing educational classes can be taught to school students as well as adults. Additional class sessions are also projected during fair time, as a special outreach to potential clients not normally connected with Extension.

This new site will host:

- Hoop house (greenhouse)
- Gazebo with seating for outside classes
- Several demonstration gardens (which will compliment the Square Foot Demonstration garden already in use on the METRA grounds)
- Compost demonstration area



The new 52 square foot Hoop House being erected at MetraPark will be completed in spring 2015.

This facility will be used for education and will also provide plants needed for the numerous Master Gardener projects, along with a plant source to help raise funds to support the program.

Orange Blossom Wheat Midge

The orange blossom wheat midge is becoming a major threat to spring wheat in Montana. The spread began in Canada and has entered the Northern Great Plains of the

Agriculture Pest Control in Yellowstone County

U.S. Montana experienced its first major outbreak in Flathead Valley in 2006. Some fields experienced losses of more than 90%, valued at more than \$1.5 million in Flathead County alone. The wheat midge is now being found in the



North Central Triangle area and Northeastern Montana. Pondera County treated over 12,000 acres in 2013. Six Montana agricultural research centers and 26 MSU Extension offices are monitoring the spread of the midge. Information is posted on the MSU Pest Management Network website (<http://pestweb.montana.edu/>). Producers

can utilize this website to see how the spread of the orange blossom wheat midge is progressing. Growers throughout the state can view midge population locations and decide whether field monitoring is necessary. Identifying the location and spread of the midge will prove to be a valuable tool for Montana producers. Four traps were installed in Yellowstone County to check for any spread of the midge. While no midge were caught in these traps, this county data informs MSU experts that Yellowstone County has yet to be affected by the midge.

Outreach to the Underserved

The Yellowstone County Extension Agent collaborated with the Environmental Protection Specialist and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to give presentations on both weed identification and control. The Agent made three visits to the Little Big Horn College in Crow Agency. By giving area producers the opportunity to learn more about the identification of weeds in their area and the options to control weed proliferation, they will be able to increase both production and profits. With cross county collaboration and outreach to Native American agricultural producers, Extension reached underserved audiences.

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